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Teaching Strategies

Planning for Exceptions

Know your students. To meet the needs of those students who cannot celebrate particular holidays, be prepared to provide a variety of ways to accomplish your goals. Perhaps a focus on the history, art, or literature aspects of a culture would be valuable. Allow students to choose activities from acceptable alternatives whenever possible. The wide variety of activities within this book should allow flexibility for you and your students. If you offer an activity based on the religious aspect of Christmas, be prepared to offer a secular one as well. Remember, you may not actually be doing the celebrating so much as learning about how the holiday is celebrated around the world.

Students can be helped to know that not everyone celebrates Christmas, and that is all right. No one's beliefs are being questioned or threatened. No one is judging the beliefs of others. Rather, the students will be learning interesting information about other countries. Hopefully, this will replace indifference with interest and encourage further discovery and exploration.

Use Your Resources

Teachers cannot know it all. The students' families are a great source of information. Ask them to share their heritage and culture with your class. Invite them to visit, send things to class, or share their knowledge in other ways.

To put cultural learning in perspective, it helps to learn about the geography of each nation. A world map is included on page 10. Use current maps and globes whenever possible to show students where these countries are in comparison to your own. Look at the topography and compare the sizes of different countries. Find out which ones are "neighbors" and compare their traditions. Locate familiar cities. Help children find out where their ancestors lived. Become knowledgeable yourself so you can help your students become comfortable with the ever-changing world.

Gathering the following resources will assist you in carrying out activities for your classroom.

- world map
- newspapers
- world almanac
- bird and animal identification books
- folktales
- state maps or atlas
- phone books
- globe
- current encyclopedias
- contact names/numbers for multicultural resource centres

Ethnic Representatives

Once you have chosen those countries you wish to study, look around for some knowledgeable, ethnic representatives in your students' families. Invite these individuals to speak to your class. They may share family customs, food, or a sense of pride that will be rich and rewarding to your students. Let parents and relatives feel they are welcome. You may create some lasting memories for everyone involved.

Austria

Austrians begin their Christmas celebrations on St. Nicholas Day and end them a month later on Epiphany. Many of their celebrations are like those found in Germany. (See pages 27-31.)

Evergreens decorate Austrian homes at Christmas time. Sometimes they hang the decorated tip of a fir tree upside down in the corner of their best room. This becomes "Lord God's Corner."

Christkind (the Christ child) leaves unwrapped gifts beneath the Christmas tree on Christmas Eve. When the children, who have been sleeping, see the tree for the first time, they are delighted with both the gifts and the tree, which they believe Christkind has helped to decorate. The tree may hold colorful paper ornaments, nuts, apples, and candles. There may also be roses, a special Austrian Christmas symbol.

Families often attend midnight church services on Christmas Eve, and on Christmas Day they eat a large meal of roast goose with all the trimmings. They may join together to sing Christmas carols, many of which have come from Austria. Perhaps most popular is the Austrian carol "Silent Night" (page 12), which is believed to be the most widely sung carol in the world.

Activities

1. Ask someone who knows sign language to teach the class "Silent Night."
2. Have the students define the following words and phrases: silent, holy, 'round yon, quake, glories, heavenly hosts, radiant beams, and redeeming grace. Students might also illustrate the meaning of the song.
3. Write new words to fit the tune of "Silent Night."
4. Make marzipan. The recipe is below.

Marzipan

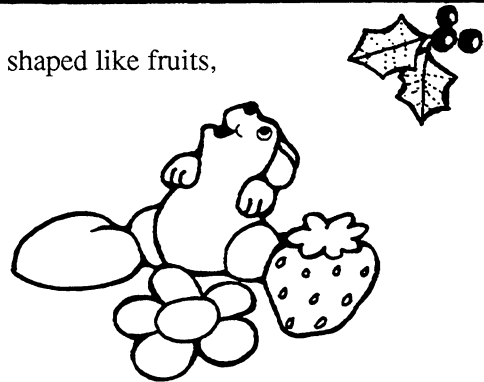
Marzipan is a favorite Austrian holiday sweet. It is typically shaped like fruits, vegetables, flowers, or animals.

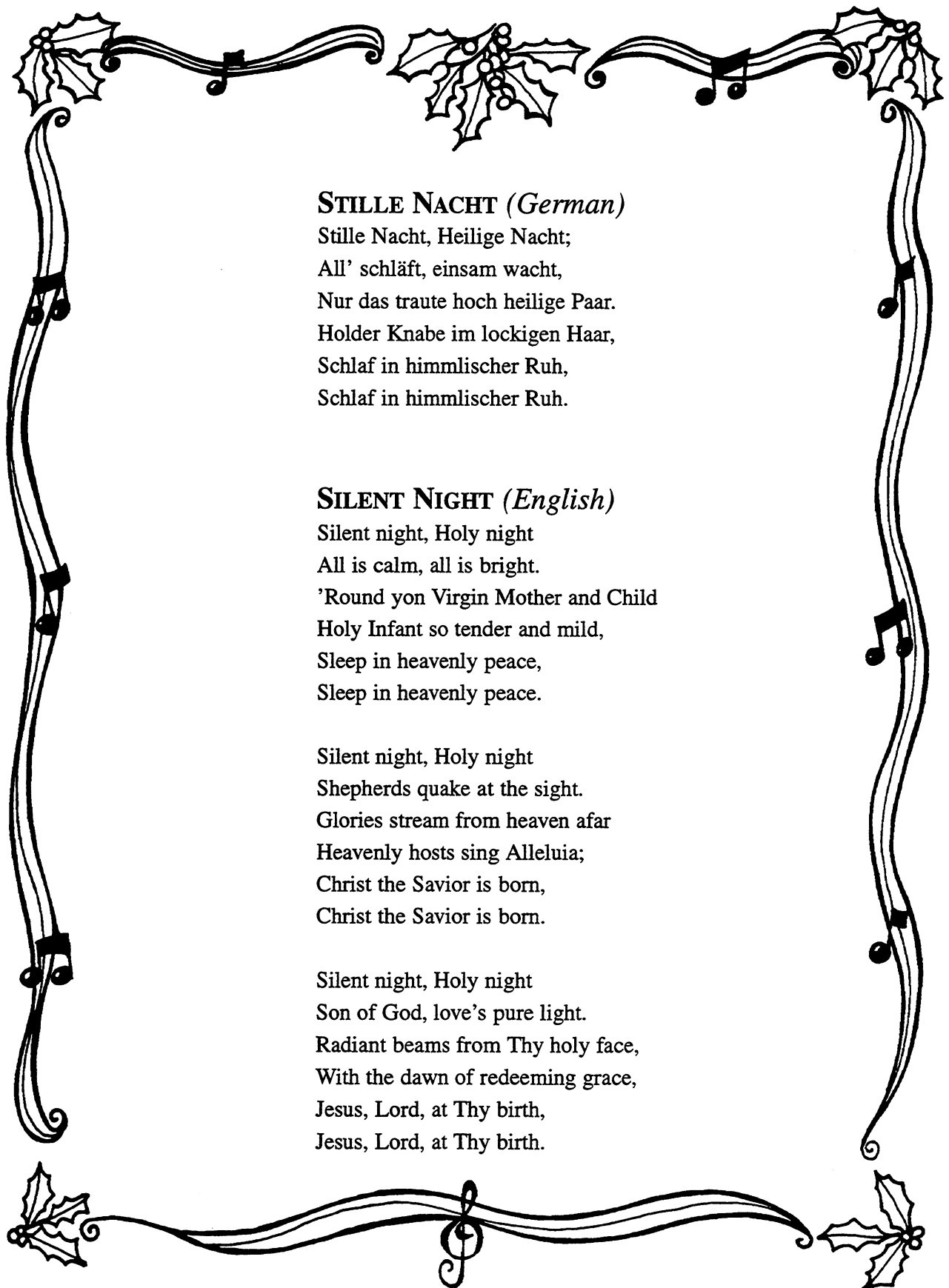
Ingredients:

- 120 g almond paste (in tube or block)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar
- 1 T. light corn syrup
- 1-2 drops food coloring (or cocoa for brown)

Preparation:

1. Break up the paste with your hands in a small bowl.
2. Knead in the sugar and corn syrup, squeezing out all lumps until the paste is smooth.
3. Decide what shapes you wish to create, and add the appropriate food coloring to small quantities of the kneaded paste. Work the color in until the paste is evenly colored.
4. Make small shapes with your hands, spoons, or other utensils. If desired, press whole cloves into orange and apple shapes for stems. Think of other ways to add details to each figure.
5. Let dry slightly and display on a doily-lined platter before eating.



**STILLE NACHT (German)**

Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht;
All' schläft, einsam wacht,
Nur das traute hoch heilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh.

SILENT NIGHT (English)

Silent night, Holy night
All is calm, all is bright.
'Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, Holy night
Son of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.